



The Honorable Allison D. Burroughs
United States District Judge
United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts
Moakley Federal Courthouse
Boston, MA 02110

Re: **Diovangi Carter**

Dear Judge Burroughs,

Families for Justice as Healing is a community organization based in Roxbury, Massachusetts. Our organization runs programming to support incarcerated people, formerly incarcerated people, and families with incarcerated loved ones. Ms. Nancy Carter, Mr. Diovangi Carter's grandmother, has been a valued member of our organization for the past two years.

Through Ms. Carter we have come to know Mr. Carter. He is deeply cared about by his community. Mr. Carter survived a difficult childhood thanks to the love and care of his grandmother. Mr. Carter is a kind person despite the trauma he has experienced, and he is ready to change his life. Mr. Carter has so much more he can offer to his community and our network can help him be positive and productive.

Mr. Carter is also a father who is loved and missed by his children. His two children are currently living with his grandmother. He is learning and growing toward different ways of parenting than what he experienced growing up. Mr. Carter makes every effort to be a loving presence in the children's daily lives despite his incarceration. Communication is even more difficult during COVID19 when people are confined to their cells for extended periods with significantly less access to the phones and no visits.

In 2018, Families for Justice as Healing collaborated with Human Impact Partners to produce a report called "[Keeping Kids and Parents Together: A Healthier Approach to Sentencing in Massachusetts](#)." The report details the latest public health research about the deleterious impact of parental incarceration on families and the broader community. This research confirms the lived experience of the formerly incarcerated parents and children of incarcerated parents who are among our members.

Parental incarceration is defined as an adverse childhood experience (ACE) by the Centers for Disease Control.¹ Children who experience ACEs are more vulnerable to lifelong physical, mental, and behavioral health issues.² When fathers are incarcerated, a family's income decreases by an average of

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2010). Adverse childhood experiences reported by adults --- five states, 2009. MMWR Morb. Mortal. Wkly. Rep. 59(49):1609-1613.

² Center for Health Care Strategies, Inc. (2017). Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Fact Sheet: Understanding Trauma: The Effect of Trauma on Health. Available at: <https://www.chcs.org/resource/understanding-effects-trauma-health/>.



22%.³ This financial burden makes it more difficult for families to afford what children need, like healthy food. Mr. Carter's incarceration means that his children's mother and his grandmother are shouldering a heavy financial and emotional burden that is only exacerbated by the stress, uncertainty, and new routines due to the pandemic.

Keeping parents and their children together is always important, and benefits public health and safety in the broader community. Now is a time when parental incarceration is particularly detrimental to the family unit.

We hope the court will consider the harmful impact of incarcerating Mr. Carter on not only himself, but also his children. Families for Justice as Healing urges the court to be lenient. Whenever Mr. Carter is released, we will be ready and committed to supporting him so he can be safe and successful in his community.

Sincerely,

Mallory Hanora
Executive Director

³ Pew Charitable Trusts. (2010). Collateral costs: Incarceration's effect on economic mobility. Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts. Available at: http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2010/collateralcosts1pdf.pdf.